

DECISION MEMO
SPECIAL USE PERMIT RENEWAL
ALLTEL CORPORATION D/B/A VERIZON BUCK KNOB
COMMUNICATIONS TOWER SITE
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
MENA-ODEN RANGER DISTRICT
SCOTT COUNTY, ARKANSAS

BACKGROUND

An application has been submitted for the renewal of a special use permit for an existing communications tower at Buck Knob Mountain for Alltel d/b/a Verizon on the Mena-Oden Ranger District. The tower is located within Township 1 South Range 28 West Section 1 of Scott County.

DECISION

I have decided to approve their communication authorization, allowing for the use and maintenance of equipment on designated communication sites with approved communication site plans.

This activity falls into a category of action that may be excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA), which the Chief of the Forest Service has determined will not have a significant effect on the human environment:

Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land (36 CFR 220.6(e)(3))

I find that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an EA or EIS. I took into account resource conditions identified in agency procedures that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances might exist:

- Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species – No PETS species were identified that would be affected by this proposed action. There is no new ground disturbance associated with the renewal of the permit by American Tower Corporation on Buck Knob, there is no need for further biological input or need of consultation. No alteration of wildlife habitats at the tower or surrounding the tower would occur. Therefore, no direct, indirect or cumulative impacts or effects to any PETS species are anticipated from this proposed action. A Biological Evaluation was

completed September 2020.

- Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds – there are no floodplains or jurisdictional wetlands within the project area and none will be impacted by project activities; there are no municipal watersheds in the project area
- Congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- Inventoried roadless areas or potential wilderness areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- Research natural areas – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites – none are present within the project area; none will be affected.
- Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas – no known historic properties will be affected by this action. No further review is necessary pursuant to the regulations of the National Historic Preservation Act, and etc.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Ouachita National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis. Scoping was conducted through September 8, 2020. No comments were received.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

This decision is consistent with the Ouachita National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan as required by the National Forest Management Act.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (OBJECTION) OPPORTUNITIES

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are not subject to an administrative review process (pre-decisional objection process) (Agriculture Act of 2014, Subtitle A, Sec. 8006).

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The project may be implemented immediately.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Jennifer Benefield, Natural Resources Manager, Mena-Oden Ranger District, 1603 Hwy 71 North Mena AR 71953, 479-394-2382.



/s/ Lori Bell for

9/15/2020

Troy Heithecker
Forest Supervisor

Date

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